THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (CAP. SATISH SHARMA): (a) to (c) The allocation under the Action Plan to fertilizer units along the HBJ pipeline was increased from 5·76 MMSCMD in 1993-94 to 6·45 MMSCMD in 1994-95.

Steps to Enhance Participation of Private Oil Companies in Exploration Activities

516. SHRIMATI CHANDRIKA ABHINANDAN JAIN: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether private oil companies are given loan on concessional terms for exploration of oil;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government are aware that these companies are not making a good headway in exploration of oil;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the steps proposed for active and full participation of private companies in oil exploration?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (CAPT. SATISH SHARMA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The companies with whom contracts have been signed are making progress as per schedule.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) To give further boost to oil exploration by private companies, the Government of India is shortly launching a Joint Venture exploration programme between National Oil Companies (ONGC/OIL) and private oil companies.

Failure of ONGC to extinguish oil well fire

517. SHRI RAM DAS AGARWAL:
SHRI PASUMPON THA. KIRUTTINAN:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Internationally acclaimed fire fighter Neil Adams has blamed ONGC for an inordinate delay to tame the blow out at the Pasarlapudi--19 gas well in the East Godavari district even after the 46th day of the flare up as reported in the 'Hindustan Times' dated 23rd February, 1995 under the caption "US expert blames it on ONGC";

(b) if so, who are the officers responsible for this inordinate delay and whether it is a fact that the required/relevant equipment was not made available to team of Mr. Adams with the result that the work for the digging of a relief well has yet to start at Pasarlapudi which in all probability would not be taken up;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the loss to the exchequer on account of fire is much more as it is one of the biggest which the US expert has ever encountered and much bigger than anything he handled in Kuwait or at Komarada in Andhra Pradesh in 1995; is so, what are the figures of total losses on this account till date and time likely to be taken to cap the well; and

(d) what steps Government have taken use far to overcome the inherent flaws in ONGC's management structure so as to deal in effectively in such an emergency situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (CAPTAIN SATISH SHARMA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. However, the claim made by Mr. Neal Adams is not correct.

(c) The loss incurred is being assessed. The fire has been extinguished on 10th March, 1995. The process of capping the well is in progress.

(d) The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas has instituted a one-man Enquiry Committe to go into the findings of the Enquiry Committee set up by ONGC and to submit its report to the Government. Future decisions would be based on the outcome of this enquiry.

Technical inquiry into the incident of fire in ONGC's Well

518. SHRI N. GIRI PRASAD:
SHRI JALALUDIN ANSARI:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a high-level technical inquiry has been undertaken into the January 8, blowout of the ONGC's well at Pasarlapudi in the Krishna-Godavari basin; and

(b) if so, the details and findings thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (CAPTAIN SATISH SHARMA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. ONGC Ltd. constituted an Enquiry Committee which submitted its report to ONGC Ltd. who are examining the same. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas has also instituted a one-man Enquiry Committee set up by the ONGC.

Fire in ONGC's Well

519. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the attention of Government has been drawn to the press newsitem captioned "Action Plan to blow out ONGC fire" as reported in the 'Hindustan Times' dated the 20th January, 1995;

(b) if so, the cause of fire in the ONGCs well in Krishna-Godavari basin;

(c) whether Government propose to strengthen its fire fighting/controlling mechanism and to keep a control on such incidents of fire; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (CAPTAIN SATISH SHARMA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) The cause of the fire is being enquired into. In the meantime, the crisis management group of ONGC, which is responsible for fire-fighting, is being strengthened in terms of sophisticated equipments.

Relief measures for persons affected by ONGC's well fire

520. SHRI B. K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a deadline had been set for capping of the rouge well near Amalapuram off Andhra Pradesh coast by the ONGC authorities with the help of experts from US;

(b) what has been the loss in terms of money due to delay beyond the deadline in capping the well;

(c) what relief measures were taken for those affected by the well fire and rehabilitation measures proposed to restore sources of livelihood in the neighbouring villages; and

(d) whether the US experts have opined that the delay in capping the well has been due to lack of crisis management expertise on the part of